

and activities of the United States Government relating to the promotion of international basic education programs and activities.

(2) **SPECIFIC DUTIES.**—The Senior Coordinator shall—

(A) facilitate program and policy coordination of international basic education programs and activities among relevant Executive branch agencies and officials, partner governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector, and nongovernmental and civil society organizations;

(B) develop and revise the strategy required under section 4;

(C) monitor, evaluate, and report on activities undertaken pursuant to the strategy required under section 4; and

(D) establish due diligence criteria for all recipients of funds provided by the United States to carry out activities under this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(c) **OFFSET.**—In order to eliminate duplication of effort and activities and to offset any costs incurred by the United States Agency for International Development in appointing the Senior Coordinator under subsection (a), the President shall, after consulting with appropriate congressional committees, eliminate a position within the United States Agency for International Development (unless otherwise authorized or required by law) that the President determines to be necessary to fully offset such costs and eliminate duplication.

SEC. 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMS.

The President shall seek to ensure that programs carried out under the strategy required under section 4 shall—

(1) apply rigorous monitoring and evaluation methodologies to determine if programs and activities provided under this subsection accomplish measurable improvements in literacy, numeracy, or other basic skills development that prepare an individual to be an active, productive member of society and the workforce;

(2) include methodological guidance in the implementation plan and support systemic data collection using internationally comparable indicators, norms, and methodologies, to the extent practicable and appropriate;

(3) disaggregate all data collected and reported by age, gender, marital status, disability, and location, to the extent practicable and appropriate;

(4) include funding for both short- and long-term monitoring and evaluation to enable assessment of the sustainability and scalability of assistance programs; and

(5) support the increased use and public availability of education data for improved decision making, program effectiveness, and monitoring of global progress.

SEC. 7. TRANSPARENCY AND REPORTING TO CONGRESS.

(a) **ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGY.**—[Not later than each March 31 immediately following a fiscal year during which the strategy developed pursuant to section 4(a) was carried out, the President shall—] *Not later than 180 days after the end of each fiscal year during which the strategy developed pursuant to section 4(a) is carried out, the President shall—*

(1) submit a report to the appropriate congressional committees that describes the implementation of such strategy; and

(2) make the report described in paragraph (1) available to the public.

(b) **MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.**—The report required under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) a description of the efforts made by relevant Executive branch agencies and officials to implement the strategy developed

pursuant to section 4, with a particular focus on the activities carried out under the strategy;

(2) a description of the extent to which each partner country selected to receive assistance for basic education meets the priority criteria specified in section 105(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act, as added by section 3; and

(3) a description of the progress achieved over the reporting period toward meeting the goals, objectives, benchmarks, and timeframes specified in the strategy developed pursuant to section 4 at the program level, as developed pursuant to monitoring and evaluation specified in section 6, with particular emphasis on whether there are demonstrable student improvements in literacy, numeracy, or other basic skills development that prepare an individual to be an active, productive member of society and the workforce.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendments be agreed to, the Rubio amendment at the desk be agreed to, and the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendments were agreed to.

The amendment (No. 743) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To add provisions regarding the promotion of United States values and the reduction of childhood exposure to extremist ideologies)

On page 8, line 20, strike “; and” and insert a semicolon.

On page 8, line 23, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

On page 8, between lines 23 and 24, insert the following:

“(E) promote United States values, especially respect for all persons and freedoms of religion, speech, and the press.

On page 12, line 14, strike “; and” and insert a semicolon.

On page 12, strike line 17 and insert “educational systems; and”.

On page 12, between lines 17 and 18, insert the following:

“(C) there is the greatest opportunity to reduce childhood and adolescence exposure to or engagement in violent extremism or extremist ideologies.”.

The amendments were ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

Mr. PORTMAN. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 601), as amended, was passed.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BONUS TRANSPARENCY ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate the message to accompany S. 114.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 114) entitled “An Act to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report regarding performance awards and bonuses awarded to certain high-level employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs.”, do pass with amendments.

Mr. PORTMAN. I move to concur in the House amendments, and I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS ECONOMIC EXPANSION ACT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 339 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title. The legislative clerk read as follows:

An bill (H.R. 339) to amend Public Law 94-241 with respect to the Northern Mariana Islands.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Murkowski-Cantwell amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 744) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To permit the extension of 350 non-immigrant permits for workers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)

Beginning on page 2, strike line 19, and all that follows through the end and insert the following:

(B) by striking “‘ending on December 31, 2019.’” and inserting “‘ending on December 31, 2019, except that for fiscal year 2017 an additional 350 permits shall be made available for extension of existing permits, expiring after the date of enactment of the Northern Mariana Islands Economic Expansion Act through September 30, 2017, of which no fewer than 60 shall be reserved for healthcare practitioners and technical operations (as that term is defined by the Department of Labor as Standard Occupational Classification Group 29-0000 or any successor provision), and no fewer than 10 shall be reserved for plant and system operators (as that term is defined by the Department of Labor as Standard Occupational Classification Group 51-8000 or any successor provision).’”.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 339), as amended, was passed.

SERGEANT JOSEPH GEORGE KUSICK VA COMMUNITY LIVING CENTER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2210, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2210) to designate the community living center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Butler Township, Butler County, Pennsylvania, as the "Sergeant Joseph George Kusick VA Community Living Center."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PORTMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 2210) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VETERANS APPEALS IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2288 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2288) to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Isakson substitute amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 745) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 2288), as amended, was passed.

OFFICE OF SPECIAL COUNSEL REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 93, S. 582.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 582) to reauthorize the Office of Special Counsel, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italics.)

S. 582

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Office of Special Counsel Reauthorization Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. ADEQUATE ACCESS OF SPECIAL COUNSEL TO INFORMATION.

Section 1212(b) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(5)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Special Counsel, in carrying out this subchapter, is authorized to—

"(i) have timely access to all records, data, reports, audits, reviews, documents, papers, recommendations, or other material available to the applicable agency that relate to an investigation, review, or inquiry conducted under—

"(I) section 1213, 1214, 1215, or 1216 of this title; or

"(II) section 4324(a) of title 38;

"(ii) request from any agency the information or assistance that may be necessary for the Special Counsel to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the Special Counsel under this subchapter; and

"(iii) require, during an investigation, review, or inquiry of an agency, the agency to provide to the Special Counsel any record or other information that relates to an investigation, review, or inquiry conducted under—

"(I) section 1213, 1214, 1215, or 1216 of this title; or

"(II) section 4324(a) of title 38.

"(B)(i) The authorization of the Special Counsel under subparagraph (A) shall not apply with respect to any entity that is an element of the intelligence community, as defined in section 3 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003), unless the Special Counsel is investigating, or otherwise carrying out activities relating to the enforcement of, an action under subchapter III of chapter 73.

"(ii) The Attorney General or an Inspector General may withhold from the Special Counsel material described in subparagraph (A) if—

"(I) disclosing the material could reasonably be expected to interfere with a criminal investigation or prosecution that is ongoing as of the date on which the Special Counsel submits a request for the material; and

"(II) the Attorney General or the Inspector General, as applicable, submits to the Special Counsel a written report that describes—

"(aa) the material being withheld; and

"(bb) the reason that the material is being withheld.

"(C)(i) A claim of common law privilege by an agency, or an officer or employee of an agency, shall not prevent the Special Counsel from obtaining any material described in subparagraph (A)(i) with respect to the agency.

"(ii) The submission of material described in subparagraph (A)(i) by an agency to the Special Counsel may not be deemed to waive any assertion of privilege by the agency against a non-Federal entity or against an individual in any other proceeding.

"(iii) With respect to any record or other information made available to the Special Counsel by an agency under subparagraph (A), the Special Counsel may only disclose the record or information for a purpose that is in furtherance of any authority provided to the Special Counsel in this subchapter.

"(6) The Special Counsel shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, and each committee of Congress with jurisdiction over the applicable agency a report regarding any case of contumacy or failure to comply with a request submitted by the Special Counsel under paragraph (5)(A)."

SEC. 3. INFORMATION ON WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS.

(a) AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES.—Section 2302 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

"(c)(1) In this subsection—

"(A) the term 'new employee' means an individual—

"(i) appointed to a position as an employee on or after the date of enactment of the Office of Special Counsel Reauthorization Act of 2017; and

"(ii) who has not previously served as an employee; and

"(B) the term 'whistleblower protections' means the protections against and remedies for a prohibited personnel practice described in paragraph (8) or subparagraph (A)(i), (B), (C), or (D) of paragraph (9) of subsection (b).

"(2) The head of each agency shall be responsible for—

"(A) preventing prohibited personnel practices;

"(B) complying with and enforcing applicable civil service laws, rules, and regulations, and other aspects of personnel management; and

"(C) ensuring, in consultation with the Special Counsel and the Inspector General of the agency, that employees of the agency are informed of the rights and remedies available to the employees under this chapter and chapter 12, including—

"(i) information with respect to whistleblower protections available to new employees during a probationary period;

"(ii) the role of the Office of Special Counsel and the Merit Systems Protection Board with respect to whistleblower protections; and

"(iii) the means by which, with respect to information that is otherwise required by law or Executive order to be kept classified in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs, an employee may make a lawful disclosure of the information to—

"(I) the Special Counsel;

"(II) the Inspector General of an agency;

"(III) Congress; or

"(IV) another employee of the agency who is designated to receive such a disclosure.